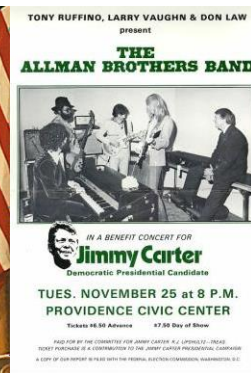




THE
Jimmy Carter
PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

The Extraordinary Life of Jimmy Carter (9-12)



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION



Supporting the National Archives



Mission

We drive openness, cultivate public participation, and strengthen our nation's democracy through public access to high-value government records.

Vision

Cutting-edge access to extraordinary volumes of government information and unprecedented engagement to bring greater meaning to the American experience.

Values

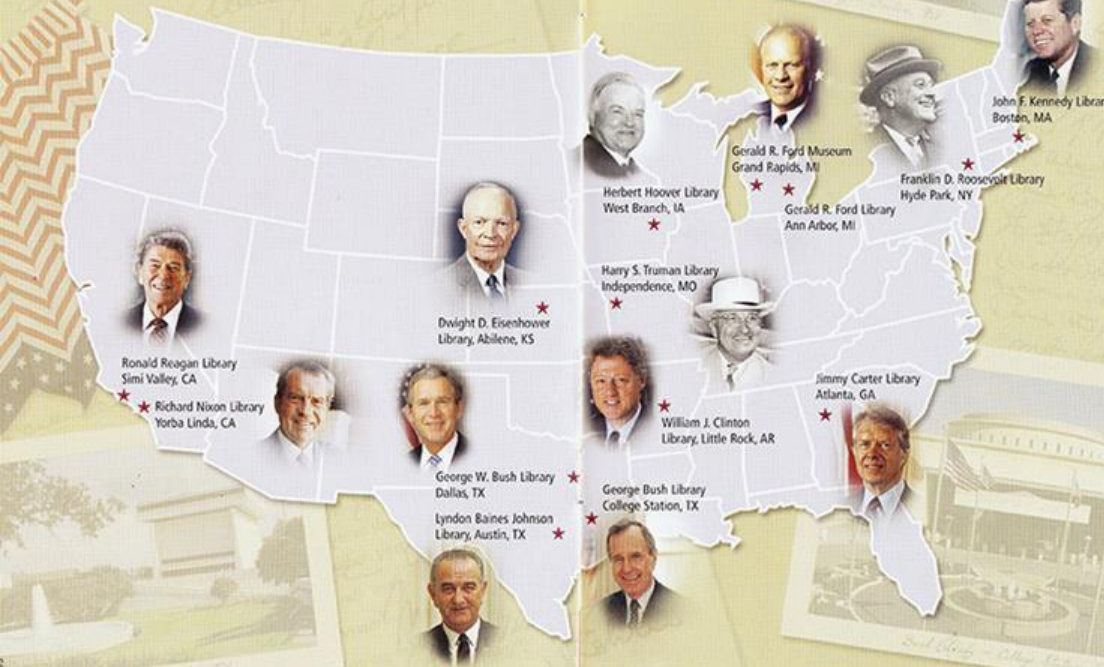
Collaborate. Innovate. Learn

Left: Transfer of Charters of Freedom to the National Archives, 12/13/1952 (National Archives Identifier: [5928179](#))

NARA's Presidential Libraries

NARA'S PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARIES

Presidential Libraries can be found across the country, from Massachusetts to California. Visit one soon, and give yourself and your family the opportunity to explore the history of our nation and the leaders who helped shape our society. Here is a chance to participate in your democracy.



- Initiated by FDR, 1939
- Formalized by Presidential Libraries Act of 1955
- Public museum not mandatory, discretion of outgoing President
- Land acquisition & construction paid by private, non-federal sources
- Typically managed by NARA in partnership with private foundations
- 15 Total (Hoover through Trump)

Left: Map of NARA Presidential Libraries ([National Archives](https://www.archives.gov/presidential-libraries))

Carter Presidential Library

- Opened October 1, 1986
- 40 million pages of written materials
- 40,000 museum objects/artifacts
- 500,000 photographs
- 2,500 hours of film, audio and video tape

Right: A portion of the Carter Library archival collections as seen from the museum floor (Carter Library)



Using Primary Sources

- They make us question where information comes from; encourages **consideration of original intent and context**
- Images, Film and Audio sources **reveal the intangible**
- Analyzing multiple documents related to a similar topic allows researchers & visitors to **consider multiple perspectives**
- No single primary source will contain all desired information, **prompting further inquiry**

What's the Secret, Jimmy?

To find the secret to President Carter's extraordinary life, we will discuss his:

- Early Life (1924-1943)
- Adult Life (1943-1963)
- Political Life (1963-1981)
- Post-Presidency (1981-Today)

Right: President Jimmy Carter and First Lady Rosalynn Carter wave to supporters and others attending an Inaugural Ball, 1/20/1977 (National Archives Identifier: [173391](#))



Early Life

(1924-1943)

Right: Jimmy Carter with his dog Bozo, 1937 (National Archives Identifier: [593560](#))



An Extraordinary Parent?

Lillian Carter

- Made Jimmy the 1st President born in a hospital
- Ignored rules of racial segregation
- Volunteered to be a nurse in India at the age of 68
- Jimmy's BIGGEST fan

Left: Lillian Carter on the family farm with daughter Ruth, and son Jimmy, Archery, Georgia (Carter Library) Right: Lillian Carter celebrates her son Jimmy's victory in the 1976 Presidential Election (Carter Library)



An Extraordinary Home?



- Built 1922, Carters move in 1928
- No running water; electricity comes later [with New Deal's Rural Electrification Act](#)
- [Now a part of Jimmy Carter National Historical Park in Archery, Georgia](#)

Left: Jimmy Carter's Boyhood Home in Archery, Georgia (National Park Service)



- Awoke “An Hour Before Daylight” for farm chores that were “*closer to the stone age than modern farming*”
- Consistently earned “A” grades in *most* subjects
- An entrepreneur, sold peanuts & ice cream in town

Right: Jimmy Carter on the family farm as a boy (Carter Library)
Far Right: Jimmy Carter's First Grade Report Card (Carter Library)



NATIONAL ARCHIVES *and* RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

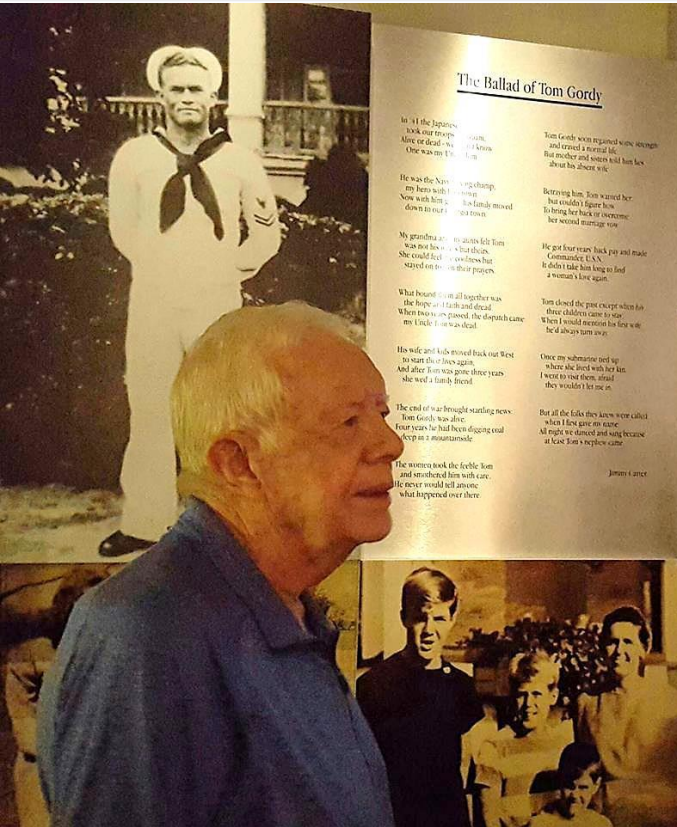


Adult Life

(1943-1963)

Left: Rosalynn Carter and Jimmy Carter on their wedding day, 7/7/1946 (Carter Family Photos)

Being Inspired to Serve?



- Carter shares special bond with Uncle Tom Gordy (Lillian's brother)
- Gordy serves in Navy, sends Carters letters & postcards from all over the world
- Carter resolves to join the Navy, requests course catalogue from U.S. Naval Academy before entry into high school
- Carter pays tribute to Gordy in poem, *The Ballad of Tom Gordy*

Left: Jimmy Carter stands in front of a portrait of his uncle Tom Gordy, who was a prisoner of war during World War II, on display at Andersonville National Historic Site in Georgia (NPS Photo)

The Ballad of Tom Gordy, by Jimmy Carter

In '41 the Japanese
took our troops on Guam.
Alive or dead — we didn't know.
One was my Uncle Tom.

He was the Navy boxing champ,
my hero with his crown.
Now with him gone, his family moved
down to our Georgia town.

My grandma and my aunts felt Tom
was not his wife's but theirs.
She could feel the coolness but
stayed on to join their prayers

What bound them all together was
the hope and faith and dread.
When two years passed, the dispatch came:
my Uncle Tom was dead.

His wife and kids moved back out West
to start their lives again,
And after Tom was gone three years
she wed a family friend

The end of war brought startling news:
Tom Gordy was alive.
Four years he had been digging coal
deep in a mountainside.

The women took the feeble Tom
and smothered him with care.
He never would tell anyone
what happened over there.

Tom Gordy soon regained some strength
and craved a normal life,
But mother and sisters told him lies
about his absent wife

Betraying him. Tom wanted her,
but couldn't figure how
To bring her back or overcome
her second marriage vow.

He got four years' back pay and made
Commander, U.S.N.
It didn't take him long to find
a woman's love again.

Tom closed the past except when his
three children came to stay;
When I would mention his first wife
he'd always turn away.

Once my submarine tied up
where she lived with her kin.
I went to visit them, afraid
They wouldn't let me in.

But all the folks they knew were called
when I first gave my name;
All night we danced and sang because
at least Tom's nephew came.

*The Ballad of Tom Gordy, a poem from *Always a Reckoning, and Other Poems* by Jimmy Carter*
([Carter Library](#))

Carter's Path to the Navy

- Graduates Plains High School, 1941
- Attends Georgia Southwestern College in Americus for 1 year
- Studies mathematics at Georgia Institute of Technology for 1 year to qualify for U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland
- Receives appointment to the academy in 1943
- Part of accelerated 3-year program during WWII

Right: Jimmy Carter at the U.S. Naval Academy, 1943-1946 (Carter Library)



Life After Annapolis



- Graduates from academy 1946, receives 1st commission as Ensign
- Marries Rosalynn Smith July 7, 1946 (longest-married presidential couple)
- Moves to Norfolk, Virginia

Left: Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter on their wedding day, 7/7/1946 (Carter Library) Right: Reproductions of the attire worn by Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn Carter on their wedding day on display at the Carter Library Museum (Carter Library)

In the Navy, 1946–1953

- Carter serves on surface ships and diesel-electric submarines in both Atlantic and Pacific fleets
- Attends U.S. Navy Submarine School, studying reactor technology & nuclear physics
- Senior officer of USS K-1



Right: Lieutenant James “Jimmy” Carter in main control room of USS K-1 ([Naval History and Heritage Command](#))

Serving Under Rickover



Carter is promoted to Lieutenant under command of Captain Hyman Rickover to assist “in the design and development of nuclear propulsion plants for naval vessels.”

“I think, second to my own father, Rickover had more effect on my life than any other man.”

—Jimmy Carter—

Left: Jimmy Carter with Hyman Rickover and James Schlesinger, 12/1/1977 (National Archives Identifier: [177010](#))

Leadership at Chalk River

- Chalk River Laboratories near Ottawa, Canada sustains damaged core, release of radioactive material in 1952
- Carter trains & leads team of 23 Navy personnel to repair reactor in 90-second increments
- Reactor active two years later

Right: National Research Council and Zeep buildings, Chalk River Laboratories, Deep River, Ontario, Canada, 1945 (National Research Council Canada)



Running a Family Business?



- After father's passing in 1953, Jimmy leaves active duty to take over family peanut farm, warehouse and store in Plains, GA
- The Carters only make \$250 profit first year but quickly learn the business
- Carter's civic engagement builds strong community relationships; inspires entrance to politics (Lions Club, Sumter Co. School Board, Library Board, Future Farmers of America)

Left: Jimmy Carter and sons Jeff and Chip riding on a tractor (Carter Family Photos) Right: A bag of seed peanuts that would have been sold at Carter's Warehouse in Plains, Georgia (Carter Library)

Political Life

(1963-1981)

*Right: The White House, 1/15/1977 (National Archives Identifier:
[6384319](#))*



Running for Public Office?

- Elected to Georgia State Senate in 1963 w/overturn of fraudulent election
- Loses first run for Georgia Governor in 1966, tries again & wins in 1970

Left: Campaign poster for one of Jimmy Carter's successful runs for the Georgia State Senate. (Carter Library) Right: Jimmy Carter shaking hands with voters while running for Georgia governor (Carter Library)



Being a Political Catalyst?

- Carter is stark contrast to predecessor Lester Maddox who closed his Atlanta restaurant rather than comply w/integration
- Part of “New South” wave of anti-racist Democrats winning public office in the southeastern U.S. in 1970s

Right: Excerpt from Governor Jimmy Carter's Inaugural Address, 1/12/1971 ([Carter Center](#))



Having Really Close Friends?

The Peanut Brigade

- Dedicated volunteers including family, friends & neighbors who helped Carter get his message out to more voters in more places than any other presidential candidate
- Named for Carter's time as a Peanut Farmer in Georgia

Left: Members of Jimmy Carter's Presidential Campaign Staff came to be known as the "Peanut Brigade" for their support of Carter who operated a peanut farm and distribution business in rural Georgia (Carter Library)



Building New Relationships?

- Carter builds upon work of Presidents before him like Gerald Ford & Richard Nixon
- Establishes Diplomatic Relations with China, the “*most significant accomplishment*” of his presidency

Right: Deng Xiaoping and Jimmy Carter meeting in Washington following the normalization of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and China, 1/29/1979 (National Archives Identifier: [183165](#))

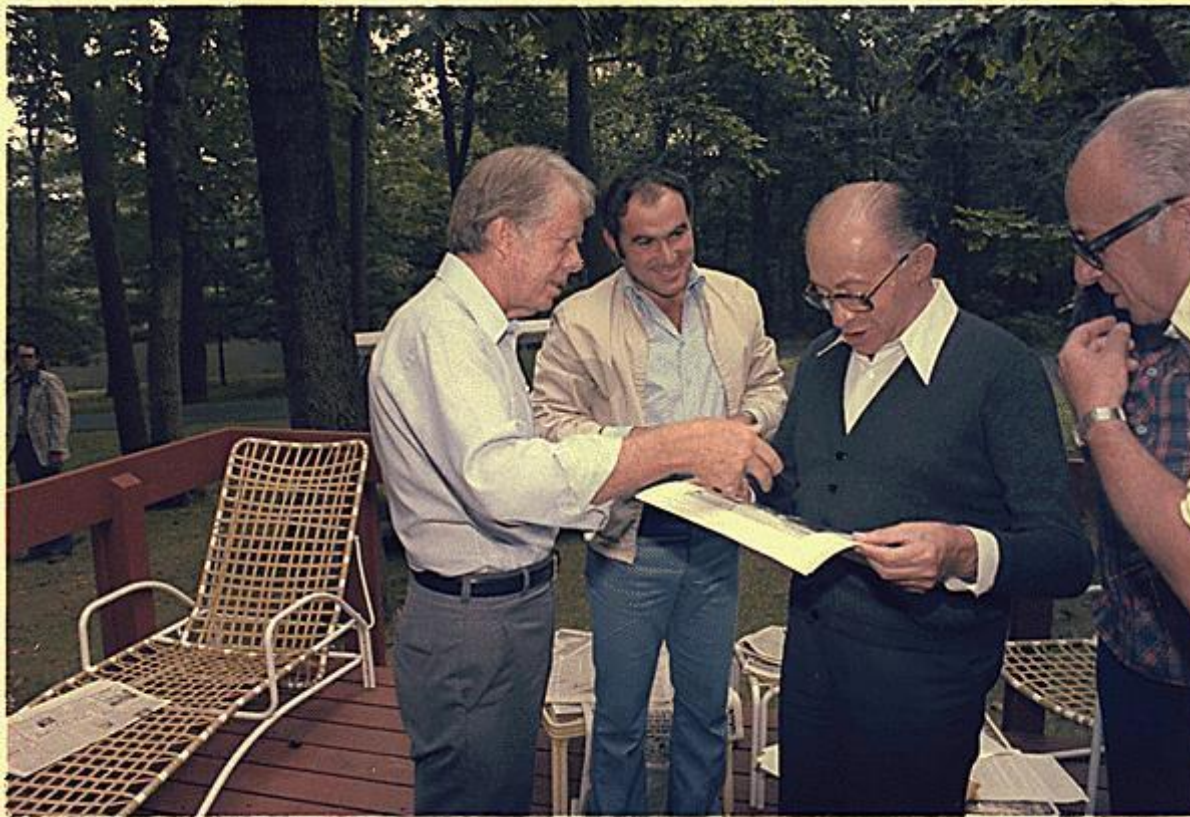


Helping Friends Make Peace?

Camp David Accords

- Invites leaders of Egypt & Israel to the U.S. for peace summit
- After 12 days of failures, succeeds on 13th day
- Ends more than 40 years of war, establishes diplomatic relations, returns Sinai peninsula to Egypt
- Both countries have remained at peace through today

*Left: Jimmy Carter and Menachem Begin with members of the Israeli delegation at Camp David, 09/17/1978
(National Archives Identifier: [181417](#))*



In Carter's Own Words

President Carter
speaks on the
subject of
Menachem Begin
at the LBJ
Foundation Civil
Rights Summit,
04/09/2014 ([LBJ
Foundation](#))



Protecting Parks, Forests & Wildlife?



- Carter protects more than 100 million acres of land during his 4 years as President
- Creates 34 new national parks, forests, monuments & wildlife refuges
- Made Honorary National Park Ranger in 2016 in hometown of Plains, Georgia

Left: For his contributions to conservation as President, Jimmy Carter is made an honorary National Park Ranger by the National Park Service, 4/17/2016 (NPS Photo)

Post- Presidency (1981-Today)

Right: President and Mrs. Carter leave a polling center near Juba, South Sudan after observing voting during the referendum, 01/29/2011 (The Carter Center)





Informational video, “Building Hope” that introduces the mission of The Carter Center ([Carter Center](#))

No Longer President, Still a Leader

“Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter have done more good things for more people in more places than any other couple on the face of the Earth.”

— Bill Clinton —

Clockwise From Top Left: Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Jimmy Carter, 2002 (Carter Library); Presidential Medals of Freedom awarded to Carters by President Clinton (Carter Library); Mounted automatic weapon presented to Carter Center for serving as international election monitors (Carter Library)

Living a Very Long Life?



- Defeated brain cancer at 92 years of age
- Longest-living President in U.S. History (born October 1, 1924)
- Longest-married Presidential Couple (July 7, 1946 — today)

Left: 2016 presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former first lady Rosalynn Carter, former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton at their 75th wedding anniversary celebration, 7/7/2021 (Carter Center)

“I have one life and one chance to make it count for something...My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference.”

- Jimmy Carter -



Or is This Jimmy's Secret?



Jimmy Carter greets residents of South Bronx, New York, 10/5/1977 (National Archives Identifier: [176402](#))



Further Inquiry

Online Student and Educator Resources

Carter Library on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#)

[Frequently Requested Carter Research Topics](#)

[Carter Library Museum Virtual Tour](#)

[Carter Library Teacher Resources](#)

[Carter Library Professional Development](#)

[The Carter Center Teacher Resource Center](#)

[Jimmy Carter National Historical Park Teacher Resources](#)

[National Archives Educator Resources](#)

[DocsTeach](#)